Amendments to the Specification

Please replace Paragraph [0001] of the application with the following paragraph.

[0001] The present application is related to four co-pending and commonly-owned applications filed on even date herewith, the disclosure of each is hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety, these four applications being respectively entitled:

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT WITH MULTISTROKE FIRING INCORPORATING AN ANTI-BACKUP MECHANISM", Ser. No. 10/673,929, to Frederick E. Shelton, Mike Setser, and issued as US Patent No. 6,959,852 on November 1, 2005;

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING MULTISTROKE FIRING WITH OPENING LOCKOUT", Ser. No. 10/674,236, to Frederick E. Shelton, Jeffrey S. Swayze, Douglas B. Hoffman;

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING A FIRING MECHANISM HAVING A LINKED RACK TRANSMISSION", Ser. No. 10/673,930, to Jeffrey S. Swayze, Frederick E. Shelton IV, and issued as US Patent No. 6,905,057 on June 14, 2005; and

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING MULTISTROKE FIRING INCORPORATING A TRACTION-BIASED RATCHETING MECHANISM", Ser. No. 10/673,662, to Jeffrey S. Swayze, Frederick E. Shelton IV, and issued as US Patent No. 7,000,819 on February 21, 2006.

Please replace Paragraph [0046] of the application with the following paragraph.

[0046] With continued reference to FIG. 4, the implement portion 22 also includes components that respond to the firing motion of the firing rod 32. In particular, the firing rod 32 rotatably engages a firing trough member 66 having a longitudinal recess 68. Firing trough member 66 moves longitudinally within frame 28 in direct response to longitudinal

motion of firing rod 32. A longitudinal slot 70 in the closure tube 24 operably couples with the rotation knob 30 (not shown in FIGS. 2-6) and a short longitudinal slot 72 in the frame 28 radially aligned with the longitudinal slot 70 is engaged to the rotation knob 30. The length of the longitudinal slot 70 in the closure tube 24 is sufficiently long as to allow relative longitudinal motion with the rotation knob 30 to accomplish firing and closure motions respectively.

Please replace Paragraph [0048] of the application with the following paragraph.

[0048] In FIGS. 2, 5, 6, respectively, the end effector 12 is depicted in a sequence of open (i.e., start) condition, clamped and unfired condition, and fully fired condition. Features of the E-beam 80 that facilitate firing of the end effector 12, in particular, are depicted. In FIG. 2, the wedge sled driver 88 is in its fully proximally position, indicating an unfired staple cartridge 82. A middle pin 106 is aligned to enter the firing recess 94 in the staple cartridge 82, for distally driving the wedge sled driver 88. A bottom pin or cap 108 of the E-beam [[~~82~~]] 80 slides along a bottom surface of the elongate channel 16, thus the middle and bottom pins 106, 108 slidingly engage the elongate channel 16. In the open and unfired state of FIG. 2, a top pin 110 of the E-beam 80 has entered and is residing within an anvil pocket 112 of the anvil 14, and thus does not impede repeated opening and closing of the anvil 14.

Please replace Paragraph [0056] of the application with the following paragraph.

[0056] In the fully open position of FIG. 7, the upper portion 160 of the closure trigger 26 contacts and holds a locking arm 172 of the pivoting closure release button 38 in the position shown. When the closure trigger 26 reaches its fully depressed position, the closure trigger 26 releases the locking arm 172 and an abutting surface 170 rotates into engagement with a distal rightward notch 171 of the pivoting locking arm 172, holding the closure trigger 26 in this clamped or closed position. A proximal end 176 of the locking arm 172 pivots about a lateral pivotal connection 174 with the housing 154 to expose the closure release button 38. An intermediate, distal side 178 of the closure release button 38 is urged proximally by a

compression spring 180, which is compressed between a housing structure 182 and closure release button 38. The result is that the closure release button 38 urges the locking arm 172 counterclockwise (when viewed from the left) into locking contact with the abutting surface 170 of closure trigger 26, which prevents unclamping of closure trigger 26 when the linked transmission firing system 150 is in an unretracted condition, as described in greater detail below.